



RHIPIDURA RUFIFRONS.

*J. Gould and H. C. Fischer del. et lith.*

*Hillman del. & Walton imp.*

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### Rufous-fronted Fantail.

*Muscicapa rufifrons*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Suppl., p. 1.—Vieill. 2nde Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxi. p. 465.

—Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 809.

*Orange-rumped Flycatcher*, Lewin, Birds of New Holl., pl. 13.

*Rufous-fronted Flycatcher*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Suppl., vol. ii. p. 220.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. x. p. 373.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vi. p. 213.

*Rhipidura rufifrons*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 248.—Less. Man. d'Orn., tom. i. p. 199.

*Bur-ril*, Aborigines of New South Wales.

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THE Rufous-fronted Fantail is one of the most beautiful and one of the oldest known members of the group to which it belongs, having been originally described by Latham in his "Index Ornithologicus," and included in the works of nearly every subsequent writer on Ornithology. In Mr. Caley's short but valuable "Notes on the Birds of New South Wales," he says, "This bird appears to me to be a rare one, at least I do not recollect having ever seen any other specimen than the present. I met with it on the 15th of October 1807, at Cardunny, a place about ten miles to the north-east of Paramatta. It is a thick brush (or under-wood), and is the resort of the *great Bat*." The fact of the colony having at that early date been but little explored will readily account for Caley's opinion of the rarity of this bird; but had he visited the thick brushes of Illawarra, the Liverpool range and the Hunter, he would have found that those situations are its natural habitat, and that it is there to be met with in considerable numbers.

Although many of its habits closely resemble those of the *Rhipidura albiscapa*, they are, as the greater length of its legs would indicate, far more terrestrial; it runs over the ground and the fallen logs of trees with great facility; while thus engaged, and particularly when approached by an intruder, it constantly spreads and displays its beautiful tail, and evinces a great degree of restlessness. It is always found in the most secluded parts of the forest, no portion of which appears to be too dense for its abode.

I never met with it in Van Diemen's Land, or on the islands in Bass's Straits, neither do I recollect having seen it in South Australia; and it has not been found in Western Australia, or on the north coast, in which latter locality it is represented by the *Rhipidura Dryas*.

I had no opportunity of observing it during the breeding-season, but frequently encountered its deserted little cup-shaped nests, which bore a general resemblance to that of the *R. albiscapa*, figured on the preceding plate.

The sexes are precisely alike in colour; and their only outward difference consists in the somewhat smaller size of the female.

Forehead rusty red, continuing over the eye; crown of the head, back of the neck, upper part of the back and wings olive-brown; lower part of the back, tail-coverts, and the basal portions of the tail rusty red; remainder of the tail blackish brown, obscurely tipped with light grey; the shafts of the tail-feathers for nearly half their length from the base light rusty red; throat and centre of the abdomen white; ear-coverts dark brown; chest black, the feathers of the lower part edged with white; flanks and under tail-coverts light fawn-colour; eyes, bill and feet brown.

The figures are of the natural size.